

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 07936 020903Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7615
INFO USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS TOKYO 07936

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, JA
SUBJECT: AUTOMOBILES: MITI URGES BOOSTING OF AUTO PART
IMPORTS

1. SUMMARY: MITI PLANS TO FOSTER ONGOING EFFORT BY JAPANESE AUTO INDUSTRY TO SOURCE GREATER NUMBER OF AUTO-MOTIVE PARTS, COMPONENTS AND MATERIALS OVERSEAS. END SUMMARY.
2. IN RESPONSE TO EMBASSY QUERY, MITI SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED MAY 2 PRESS REPORTS THAT MITI HAS BEEN BEHIND UPSURGE OF AUTO INDUSTRY INTEREST IN OVERSEAS SOURCING AND HAS ISSUED GUIDANCE TO THE INDUSTRY, ASKING THAT IT PURCHASE "AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE" FROM OVERSEAS. TO ENCOURAGE INDUSTRY IN THIS DIRECTION, MITI PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ENCOURAGING THE FINANCE MINISTRY RECENTLY TO EXTEND THE STANDARD PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT FOR AUTOMOTIVE PART IMPORTS FROM FOUR MONTHS TO ONE YEAR (TOKYO 3273) AND HAS ALSO BEGUN TO STUDY THE POSSIBILITY OF LOWERING THE IMPORT DUTY ON AUTO COMPONENTS FROM THE PRESENT 6-7 PERCENT TO SLIGHTLY BELOW 4-5 PERCENT. MITI SPOKESMAN GAVE NO INDICATION AS TO HOW LONG THIS "STUDY" MIGHT TAKE.
3. THESE EFFORTS APPARENTLY ARE PAYING OFF. NISSAN HAS SET UP ITS OWN TRADING COMPANY AND JUST ANNOUNCED PURCHASE OF OVER QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF HEADLIGHTS FROM

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GM (SEPTEL); TOYOTA, ACCORDING TO MITI, WILL SHORTLY DISPATCH AN ENGINEERING TEAM TO THE U.S. TO CONSULT WITH GE RE PARTS AND BUILDING TECHNIQUES AND MITSUBISHI MOTORS HAS ANNOUNCED A BOOST IN ITS TRANSMISSION IMPORTS FROM ITS CHRYSLER AFFILIATE.
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4. COMMENT: EMBASSY IS HIGHLY PLEASED BY MITI'S ACTION
WHICH REPRESENTS NOT SIMPLY A GESTURE BUT A REAL EFFORT,
HOWEVER MODEST, BY THE GOJ TO MODIFY TRADE IMBALANCE
THROUGH INCREASED IMPORTS. SHERMAN

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